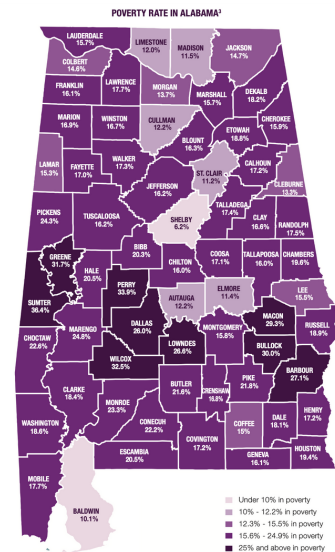


# Breaking Barriers to Prosperity Toolkit

More than 747,000 of our neighbors - including 233,000 children - live below the poverty line.

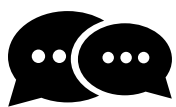
**Theory of Action:** Sharing and communicating facts, data, perspectives, and other information to better understand the need for change in Alabama.

The ultimate purpose of collecting data is to provide a basis for action or recommendation. Annually for the last 10 years, Alabama Possible produces and distributes the Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet that highlights poverty rates, educational attainment statistics, median household income data, and many other valuable data sets. To complement this data sheet, Alabama Possible has developed the Breaking Barriers to Prosperity Toolkit to guide communities from deliberation to action.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (2019)

## The Breaking Barriers to Prosperity Toolkit consists of three engaging components



**Break it Down Discussions**  
*Awareness and Deliberation*



**Virtual Poverty Simulations**  
*Empathy Building*



**Breaking Barriers Forums**  
*Action*

For trainings and access to the Barriers to Prosperity Toolkit contact:

Alabama Possible  
[info@alabamapossible.org](mailto:info@alabamapossible.org)  
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## Break it Down Discussions

### Awareness and Deliberation

Over the past decade, Alabama Possible has produced and distributed its Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet annually. The data sheet highlights poverty rates, educational attainment statistics, median household income data, and many other valuable pieces of information.

For the 2020 Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet, Alabama Possible generated a discussion guide that Alabamians and educators can use to guide conversations on the data included in the graphic tool. The discussion guide is designed to prompt shared understanding and, perhaps, catalyze action in communities across Alabama.

This virtual engagement series is entitled, "Break It Down: A Statewide Discussion on barriers to Prosperity in Alabama." In 2020, the series was held in the following counties: Colbert, Dallas, Madison, Pike, Tuscaloosa and Washington Counties.

### Engagement Process

The Break It Down Discussion process adapted norms from The David Mathews Center for Civic Life, National Issues Forums, and the Local Voices Network. The discussion process is structured to embrace consistency and promote robust dialogue using the following key components:

- Welcome and Introductions**
- Project Goals**
- Zoom Overview**
- Norms and Agreements**
- Data Sheet Review**
- Shared Understanding**
- Group Discussion**
- Conclusion**

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**Ready to engage your community?**

**Contact Alabama Possible**  
**info@alabamapossible.org**  
**www.alabamapossible.org**  
**(205) 939-1408**



## Virtual Poverty Simulation Experience

This educational and professional development experience was created as a way to help business and community leaders; students, faculty, and administrators; faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and others understand the realities of poverty. During the virtual simulation, participants will experience typical challenges faced by under-resourced families, including maintaining employment, caring for children or elderly family members, seeking public assistance, and dealing with transportation issues. Can you make it to the end of the month?

### How Does it Work?

The simulation experience components include an introduction and briefing by a facilitator, the individualized simulation exercise, and a facilitated debriefing in which participants share what they have learned about living in poverty. A full simulation takes approximately 2 hours.

This experience can accommodate up to 25 participants.

### Who Can Benefit?

The Virtual Poverty Simulation was designed to sensitize those who frequently work with or assist under-resourced families, as well as to create a broader awareness of the realities of poverty among policy-makers, business and community leaders, students, faculty, administrators, and more. The simulation enables participants to look at poverty from a variety of perspectives and then to recognize and discuss the potential for change within their community.

**Students, Faculty, and Administrators - Business and Community Leaders – State Agencies - Nonprofits and Faith-Based Organizations – Elected Officials – Professional Development Conferences – and Others**

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**Interested in taking the Poverty Simulation Challenge?**

**Contact Alabama Possible  
info@alabamapossible.org  
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(205) 939-1408**

## Breaking Barriers Forums

The Breaking Barriers Forums are a convergence of awareness & deliberation and empathy building in a community. This phase of the Barriers to Prosperity Toolkit is designed to facilitate a discussion between community citizenry and decision-makers guiding them in identifying actionable ideas for local solutions.

### How Does it Work?

The Breaking Barriers Forums engagement process incorporates a series of questions with three areas of focus:

1. What did we learn from our first conversation?
2. What do you want to do?
3. What is the way forward?

By the end of the forum, participants will be able to:

- Describe areas of common concern related to systemic issues of poverty for one's local community.
- Engage in dialogue grounded in active listening about meaningful solutions to eliminate barriers to prosperity in one's local community and Alabama.
- Identify through collaboration and critical reflection ideas for individual and community-based action.

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**Ready to move from deliberation to action?**

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